

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 304886

FOR SPECIAL ASSISTANT JOE MCCLAUGHLIN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: PRESS INQUIRY ABOUT DR. GERTZ'S VISIT TO
WASHINGTON AUGUST 31, 1976

REFERENCE: MEXICO 11014 OF AUGUST 27

SUMMARY: ROBERT OWENS OF THE LOS ANGELES TIMES TELEPHONED
THE SENIOR ADVISER ON NARCOTICS DECEMBER 15 FOR COMMENT
ABOUT THE VISIT OF DR. GERTZ TO WASHINGTON LAST AUGUST 31,
ALLEGING THE TRIP WAS FOR PERSONAL BUSINESS, REIMBURSED
BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THAT THE GOM HAD RESTRICTED
DEA'S ACTIVITIES IN MEXICO. THE SENIOR ADVISER EXPLAINED
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THE BACKGROUND OF THE MEETING (AS ONE OF A CONTINUING
SERIES) AND STRESSED THE HIGHLY COOPERATIVE CONTINUING
WORKING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. HE
ADDED THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND THE ALLEGATIONS.
END SUMMARY.

1. ROBERT OWENS OF THE LOS ANGELES TIMES ASKED THE SENIOR ON THE RUMOR THAT DR. GERTZ HAD ASKED FOR A STATE AND DEA BRIEFING IN WASHINGTON IN LATE AUGUST WHILE THE TRUE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS TO PERFORM PERSONAL BUSINESS IN NEW YORK CITY. MR. OWENS IMPLIED THAT A TELEGRAM FROM THE

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EMBASSY ON THE SUBJECT DATED AUGUST 26, 1976 TENDED TO SUBSTANTIATE THIS ALLEGATION. THE SENIOR ADVISER REPLIED THAT THE DEA ADMINISTRATOR AND HE HAD MET WITH DR. GERTZ ON AUGUST 31 FOR THE PURPOSE OF REVIEWING THE PROGRESS OF THE MEXICAN NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM AND STRESSED THE POINT THAT IT WAS NOT A "BRIEFING." HE EXPLAINED TO MR. OWENS THAT DR. GERTZ WAS THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL COORDINATOR OF THE ERADICATION AND INTERDICTION CAMPAIGN IN MEXICO (SINCE NOVEMBER 1975). HE ADDED THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF BOTH GOVERNMENTS TAKE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO MEET IN THE U.S. OR MEXICO FOR DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE MEXICAN NARCOTICS PROGRAM. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE EXPLAINED HIS RECENT PARTICIPATION IN THE ARA NARCOTICS COORDINATORS' CONFERENCE IN GUATEMALA, AND HIS SUBSEQUENT STOP OFF IN MEXICO CITY TO MEET ON DECEMBER 13 WITH THE NEWLY APPOINTED MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR ON-GOING DISCUSSIONS ABOUT NARCOTICS MATTERS WHICH ARE OF VITAL CONCERN TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS.

2. CONCERNING THE REQUEST FOR COMMENT ABOUT REIMBURSEMENT BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT OF THE TRAVEL OF DR. GERTZ, THE SENIOR ADVISER STATED THAT THIS ALLEGATION HAD NO BASIS IN FACT.

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3. REPLYING TO THE REQUEST FOR COMMENT BY MR. OWENS THAT THE GOM HAD FORBIDDEN DEA TO CONDUCT ON-SITE VERIFICATIONS OF THE ERADICATION CAMPAIGN IN MEXICO, THE SENIOR ADVISER REPLIED THAT THE ROLE OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT INCLUDING DEA IN MEXICO, AS WELL AS IN OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES, WAS NOT OPERATIONAL BUT RATHER A MISSION OF OFFERING COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN ORDER TO HELP THE FOREIGN GOVERNMENT ACHIEVE AN EFFECTIVE NARCOTICS CONTROL CAPABILITY. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE QUESTION WAS PROBABLY PHRASED IN AN ERRONEOUS CONTEXT AND AGAIN REFERRED TO THE POSITIVE SPIRIT OF COOPERATION THAT HE HAD NOTED DURING THE RECENT DISCUSSION IN MEXICO INVOLVING THE U.S. AMBASSADOR, THE DEA ADMINISTRATOR, HIMSELF AND THE NEWLY APPOINTED MEXICAN ATTORNEY GENERAL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE NARCOTICS CONTROL EFFORT.

FYI: IT WOULD APPEAR THAT MR. OWENS HAS SOMEHOW OBTAINED

A COPY OF THE REFERENCE CABLE THAT MOTIVATED THE ABOVE ALLEGATION AND IS PURSUING A POSSIBLE RUMOR CIRITICAL OF THE REASON BEHIND THE VISIT TO THE U.S. OF DR. GERTZ LAST AUGUST. END FYI.

4. THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS PASSED TO YOU AS THERE MAY BE PRESS GUIDANCE INQUIRIES AT THE EMBASSY ON THE SAME SUBJECT.
ROBINSON

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